



# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

## \*\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*\*

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### New on-line data show jump in attendance rates

*WINSS/SPR add data for 2003-04 school year*

MADISON—New data available through the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) and School Performance Report (SPR) websites show a 94.6 percent statewide attendance rate, the highest it's been since the Department of Public Instruction started providing an on-line report card.

"Improving school attendance is an important step in boosting student achievement and closing the gap between students of color, economically disadvantaged students and their peers," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "Attending school regularly is vital to academic learning and future careers."

Attendance rates increased across all grades from the previous year, except at grade 12 where it was unchanged. Elementary-level students tend to have the best attendance (95.7 percent for 2003-04). The statewide middle/junior high school attendance rate for 2003-04 was 94.8 percent, and the high school attendance rate was 93.0 percent. Attendance rates increased across all racial and ethnic groups, with the largest gains for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students.

#### Statewide Attendance

2003-04	94.6
2002-03	94.3
2001-02	94.3
2000-01	94.2
1999-00	94.4
1998-99	94.0
1997-98	94.4
1996-97	94.3

"Students who attend school every day have the opportunity to learn from their teachers and fellow students," Burmaster said. "Regular school attendance and engaged learning provides the foundation for academic success that pays lifetime dividends."

Burmaster praised the work of the Alliance for Attendance in Milwaukee for its efforts to improve daily attendance. Through Burmaster's leadership, students, parents, and stakeholders throughout the Milwaukee community formed the Alliance for Attendance last year to develop strategies

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to reduce truancy. Students are considered truant if they are absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five or more days on which school is held during a semester. "The work of the Milwaukee Alliance for Attendance is gaining attention," she noted. "Observers from several school districts throughout the state have attended Milwaukee Alliance meetings to understand more about the common vision a community must share and the cooperative efforts it must make to improve student attendance."

WINSS/SPR data report a truancy rate that has fluctuated over the past five years, with this year's rate lower than two years ago. Wisconsin's definition of truancy changed in 1998-99, making rates from previous years incomparable. Data also showed an increase in out-of-school suspensions, 6.9 percent in 2003-04 compared to 6.0 percent in 1999-00. The percentage of students expelled, 0.2 percent, best described as unchanged from five years ago. Other truancy, suspension, and expulsion data from WINSS/SPR show

- males and females are reported habitually truant at about the same rate, males are suspended at nearly double the rate of females, and males are expelled from school at triple the rate of females.
- the transitional grades of six and nine show spikes in the number of habitually truant students.
- high school has the highest rate of habitually truant students.
- white students, who comprise 79 percent of enrollment, make up 35 percent of reported habitual truants, 46 percent of out-of-school suspension, and 63 percent of expulsions.
- students of color, who comprise 21 percent of enrollment, make up 65 percent of reported habitual truants, 54 percent of out-of-school suspensions, and 37 percent of students who are expelled.

"No one group can solve the problem of poor school attendance, truancy, or disruptive behavior that results in suspension or expulsion," Burmaster said. "We must continue our efforts to work together to ensure that our schools are safe havens for our students, places where they feel welcome and focused on their own academic learning."

School districts are continuing to provide data for the state's on-line reporting system, which is being upgraded to comply with federal data reporting requirements under the No Child Left Behind law. Data on statewide testing for 2004-05 and dropout and graduation rates for 2003-04, tied to the Individual Student Records System, will be available on-line later this year.

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**NOTE:** Tables that provide additional information on statewide attendance rates and other selected indicators from new data available through the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) and School Performance Report (SPR) follow.

# WINSS/SPR Profile

## Statewide Attendance Rates by Student Groups

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Statewide	94.6	94.3	94.3	94.2	94.4	94.0	94.4	94.3
Elementary	95.7	95.4	95.5	95.5	95.7	95.3	95.5	95.5
Middle/Jr High	94.8	94.5	94.5	94.2	94.5	94.1	94.1	93.9
High School	93.0	92.9	92.6	92.3	92.5	92.2	93.1	92.7
African American	89.5	89.2	88.8	87.8	88.8	87.7	89.8	88.9
Asian	95.9	95.8	95.6	95.4	95.6	95.4	95.8	95.9
Hispanic	92.4	92.0	91.9	91.2	91.7	90.7	91.5	90.8
Native American	90.3	90.1	90.0	89.8	89.7	89.5	89.4	89.5
White	95.5	95.2	95.2	95.2	95.2	94.9	95.1	95.0

## Statewide Attendance Rates by Grade

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Statewide	94.6	94.3	94.3	94.2	94.4	94.0	94.4	94.3
Pre-Kindergarten	93.4	93.2	93.1	94.5	95.6	91.7	92.1	91.6
Kindergarten	95.1	94.8	95.1	94.9	95.1	94.6	94.8	94.5
Grade 1	95.7	95.4	95.5	95.4	95.5	95.1	95.2	95.3
Grade 2	96.0	95.7	95.8	95.7	95.8	95.6	95.9	95.8
Grade 3	96.1	95.8	96.0	95.9	96.0	95.8	96.0	96.0
Grade 4	96.1	95.8	95.9	95.9	96.0	95.7	95.9	96.0
Grade 5	95.9	95.7	95.8	95.8	95.9	95.7	95.9	95.8
Grade 6	95.3	95.0	95.0	94.9	95.2	94.7	95.0	94.9
Grade 7	94.8	94.5	94.4	94.2	94.4	94.0	94.1	94.0
Grade 8	94.4	94.1	94.0	93.4	94.0	93.7	93.7	93.4
Grade 9	92.6	92.4	92.2	91.9	92.0	91.7	93.4	92.5
Grade 10	93.5	93.2	92.9	92.7	92.7	92.4	93.1	92.8
Grade 11	92.9	92.8	92.7	92.2	92.4	92.3	92.8	92.4
Grade 12	92.8	92.8	92.6	92.5	92.4	92.3	92.9	92.7

## Selected Statewide WINSS/SPR Indicators

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99*
Expulsion — Rate (Days)	0.086	0.067	0.071	0.069	0.057	0.060
Expulsion — Students	0.186	0.159	0.170	0.167	0.152	0.162
Suspension — Rate (Days)	0.171	0.155	0.166	0.181	0.162	0.175
Suspension — Students	6.871	6.331	6.420	6.492	6.038	6.524
Retention Rate	2.232	2.301	2.658	2.932	2.864	2.884
Habitual Truancy Rate	9.433	9.434	10.049	9.319	9.126	8.677

\*The definition of habitual truancy changed in 1998-99.

**NOTE:** To examine new on-line data for 2003-04—attendance, truancy, suspension, expulsions (all discipline data), retentions/grade advancement, course offerings and course-taking, extra-/co-curricular/community activities, staff, high school graduation requirements, and limited-English proficiency—visit the Department of Public Instruction websites: WINSS at < <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/index.html> > (Click on Data Analysis) or SPR at < <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/spr/> >.